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attribution of blame to Hitler personally, it is all the more regrettable that he does not examine in detail the role of the Army.

The balance of these essays does not reflect the fact that today the Nazi policies towards the Soviet Union and its peoples are arousing more controversy than those towards the Jews, reflecting in part the current political situation in West Germany. English-speaking students will find this book a helpful introduction, but for the full impact they will have to study the German originals in their entirety.

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ALFRED W. CROSBY. *Ecological Imperialism: The Biological Expansion of Europe, 900-1900*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986. Pp. xiv, 368. \$22.95 (US).

THE WRITING OF history, like most other human activities, is often a matter of fads and fancies. One of the up-and-coming topics is the changing relation between environment and history, of which Donald Worster's recent *Nature's Economy: A History of Ecological Ideas* (New York, 1985) is an example. Accompanying this trend, perhaps in some measure because of it, historians have also shown a growing tendency to tackle 'the big picture': some writers today think nothing of grappling with the changes going on throughout the entire world over half a millenium.

There can be no better illustration of these trends than the book before us. Professor Crosby is not only concerned with the Europeans' effect upon much of the world, but he also refuses to be confined to any particular span of time. Not even the thousand years which is set down in the text satisfies him: 'It is necessary to begin at the beginning ...', he confides, 'and that means not in 1492 or 1788 but about 200 million years ago' (p. 9). It is enough to take one's breath away.

That the author should have managed to compress such a work into twelve chapters is an achievement in itself. In the first chapter, the 'Prologue', he hints at the task before us: 'European emigrants and their descendants [the implication is as agents of dispersal] are all over the place, which requires explanation' (p. 2); the second chapter, 'Pangea revisited, the Neolithic reconsidered', explores the biological and geographical differences of the continents in ancient times. Chapters three and four, 'The Norse and the Crusaders' and 'The Fortunate Isles', consider what proved to be the 'pilot programs', made by the Norsemen to Iceland, Greenland, and Vinland; by the Crusaders to the Holy Land; and by the Iberians to Madeira, the Azores, and the Canary Islands. Chapter five deals with the Europeans' mastery of the

'Winds' which led to what J.H. Parry called 'the discovery of the sea'. Chapter six concentrates upon those parts of the world (including the Middle East and Africa) which, while 'Within Reach [of the Europeans], [were] Beyond Grasp'. Chapter seven, 'Weeds', tells what happened when European crops and weeds were introduced to an American and Australian setting. Chapter eight, 'Animals', is self-explanatory. Chapter nine, 'Ills', is concerned with the dispersal of European human and animal infectious diseases. Chapter ten focuses on New Zealand which (like Hawaii) is an extreme example of biotas altered through the introduction of European organisms. Chapters eleven and twelve are headed 'Explanations' and 'Conclusions' respectively. The book is illustrated and is amply supplied with notes and index.

All in all, Crosby's book reflects unusual intellectual strength and ambition. Although, in historical works, one is not accustomed to being transported across thousands or even millions of years, one is captivated by the experience. And there are benefits to be gained. In exploring ancient contacts between continents and regions, Crosby places the possibilities and the consequences of European expansion in a much wider and more revealing setting than earlier texts. In stressing the biological aspects of European expansion, and the role of infectious diseases, he has also caused us to question the reliance we have hitherto placed upon military history. More important, he has provided us with an encompassing view, one that deals not only with humans, but the plants, animals, and germs that accompanied them. Here is the nub of the story.

An all-embracing historical study of this kind, covering such a long period of time, must, of course, rely upon the work of other scholars. Other than the fact that Crosby approaches his inquiry from the historical angle, and concerns himself, in the main, with European expansion, there is nothing essentially new about his all-encompassing view. We have known for a long time that migrating humans carried with them pests, crops, diseases, weeds, and herds. There is a vast scientific literature – as Crosby is aware – on the subject. (See, for instance, *Man's Role in Changing the Face of the Earth*, ed. W.L. Thomas [Chicago, 1956], or Hans Zinsser, *Rats, Lice, and History* [Boston, 1935].) Writers such as the zoologist Marston Bates (*The Nature of Natural History* [New York, 1961]) devoted their professional lives to the study of man's impact (either at home or abroad) upon his environment. In an article in the Thomas volume, 'Man as an Agent in the Spread of Organisms', Bates states the object of his work:

If we were discussing the general question of the relationship between human activities and the distribution of organisms, we would have to consider three different sorts of effects. First ... there is man's effect in altering the habitat – clearing, draining, irrigating, and exhausting the soil and (more rarely per-

haps) enriching the soil. Second, there is his effect in restricting and exterminating populations. And, third, there is his effect as an agent of dispersal.

Bates's focus, as far as I can see, is the same as Crosby's. Where Crosby's work differs from these earlier writers is that he has singled out the European experience. He has also given added attention to the effect on the world economy of European settlement in temperate areas. If there is a serious difference, it is that Bates and others attached greater importance than Crosby to the cultural factor: 'I have come to think', said Bates, 'that the human situation is peculiar: the geography of infectious disease in man is perhaps best understood not in strictly biological terms but in cultural terms.' When Crosby says: 'We, who are more interested in, say, rabbit propagation than in manifestations of Our Lady of Candelaria' (p. 91), he is leaving a good deal that is important unsaid. It is impossible, except by oversimplifying, to separate expansion – even the biological expansion of Europe – from the dynamism of Christianity. How else explain Iberian expansion? On this, I am one with Bates.

In such matters, it might be argued fairly that for such a large work it all depends where the author chooses to place emphasis. However, sometimes these emphases lead to conclusions which I cannot accept. Crosby has done well in reminding us of the importance of biology, yet I think it is carrying the argument too far to suggest that the replacement of native peoples was more a matter of biology than conquest. Doubtless, examples can be put forward (as they are) to prove this point. Not far from where I am sitting there is an Indian burial mound that contained artifacts dating from the De Soto period. Deep in the mound were the bones of Indians that showed the signs of sword marks; above them, in the mound's top layer, were the graves of those who are thought to have died from pathogens to which they were not immune. But the evidence that either Crosby or I can furnish is highly selective and fragmented, and provides little basis for any sweeping generalization.

At this time, we simply do not know whether biology was more important in speeding European expansion than conquest. Hence my misgivings about the statement:

The Israelites began their journey with the advantage of their infections, an immense advantage that goes far to explain how 'civilized' peoples have so often conquered less advanced peoples so easily. (This process has been most clearly elucidated by William H. McNeill, and as a predictable factor in human history has been called McNeill's Law). [p. 32]

Even allowing for the ambiguity surrounding words like 'civilization' and phrases such as 'less advanced peoples', my work in world history these past four decades, tells me that the opposite might equally well be the truth.

Until we are able to prove or disprove such a statement, I suggest we avoid talk of historical 'laws'. For historians, the study of the role of ecology and biology in the expansion of states is still in its early stages: *ex cathedra* statements must come later. Professor Crosby's volume, 'warts and all', will undoubtedly foster that study.

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J. GARRY CLIFFORD and SAMUEL R. SPENCER, JR. *The First Peacetime Draft*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1986. Pp. 336. \$29.95 (US).

HISTORIANS INTERESTED in why Americans remained isolationist for so long after the Second World War began and how Franklin D. Roosevelt responded to their stand should read this excellent book. Focusing on the domestic politics involved in the enactment of the first selective service law in September 1940, this wonderfully researched work does much to explain how a relatively small group of men helped push Roosevelt's administration, Congress, and the military into accepting the realities of a new world order.

Samuel R. Spencer, Jr. began this work in the 1940s as a dissertation on Grenville Clark, the principal author and promoter of the Selective Service and Training Act. J. Garry Clifford has enlarged the focus to examine the role of the Eastern élite in making foreign policy; opposition to intervention before the America First Committee; and Roosevelt's complicated and elusive thinking. The result is a sensitive and well-written book that intelligently defines the views of concerned Americans as they debated how to react to Germany's advance across Europe in the spring and summer of 1940.

Clark had been involved with the Plattsburg Movement in 1915 when about twelve hundred young lawyers and businessmen, graduates of the best Eastern universities, had voluntarily drilled near Lake Champlain to demonstrate their willingness to serve the nation after the sinking of the *Lusitania*. By 1916 the leaders of the movement were assisting the Department of War in recruiting officers for the Army. Plattsburgers, as the authors call them, came to believe that military training and service should be compulsory for all males after adolescence and before retirement, a view deriving partly from an aristocratic notion that it was the right thing to do, and partly from a belief that the United States should never again be without a large trained army. Nothing much came of this idea until the crisis in Europe prompted Clark, at a Harvard Club reunion of the Plattsburg Movement in May 1940, to propose they work to obtain a law for compulsory military training. Those who joined him were overwhelmingly from the east-coast élite, and much of the book describes how influential these amateurs were in pushing Wash-